

### *Alison Arnold Writes...*

Did you know that ice cut from Duxbury ponds was once sent to India? One of the last voyages of Capt. Alexander Wadsworth of Washington St. was to India with a cargo of ice from the Tudors of Boston. The cargo was stowed so carefully that less than 15% of it melted during the long voyage.

Harvesting the ice from New England ponds and rivers was big business. In 1805 Frederic Tudor, son of Col. William Tudor, an officer on the staff of George Washington, had visions of ships carrying the clear ice of New England to faraway places where winter never came. His visions became plans for shipping ice to the tropics.

Young Tudor's idea was considered ridiculous at first and he had great difficulty in finding a ship to take the first cargo to Martinique. But he slowly built up a trade that brought him a fortune and world-wide fame as the Ice King. Tudor referred to his ice ponds as his "frozen assets."

The most difficult problem in shipping was to protect the cargo from the intense heat of the tropics. Various insulating materials were used, including rice and wheat chaff, hay, tanbark, and even coal dust. But pine sawdust proved to be the best.

Tudor agents were instructed to supply taverns with ice free of charge for a time, and he taught the people how to make cold drinks and ice-cream. Along with ice from Duxbury ponds, ice was sent to the tropics from Walden Pond in Concord and from the Kennebec River in Maine. And there were large ice houses, where the ice was stored deeply under sawdust.

The harvesting of ice from ponds and rivers continued for many years. When I was a child, Duxbury's 2 ice men were Claude Cushing and Joe Merry. I can remember how they seized 50 and 100-pound chunks of ice with their big tongs, hurled the ice onto their backs and tossed it into the wooden ice chests. Under the ice chest was a pan to catch the drip of the melted ice. And woe betide anyone who forgot to empty it!

Ice is manufactured in kitchens now in steel refrigerators, where motors purr and ice cubes appear as if by magic. And no longer do ships head out across Massachusetts Bay with their cargoes of ice for the Far East.

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